

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected a number of the claims in this case as being anticipated by the Millar '358 Patent.

The Examiner has allowed claim 64 and has indicated that claims 41-43, 47-58 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if presented in independent claim format.

Claim 38 is a main independent claim which has been amended to further emphasize the structural differences between Applicants' invention over the art cited by the Examiner. More particularly, claim 38 has been amended to recite that the distal most portion of the linear engagement member is embedded in one of the two items which are held together by the linear engagement member. In the embodiments disclosed, the two items are two separate catheters.

Applicants suggest that this new limitation serves to further and more clearly distinguish over Millar '358.

In Millar '358, the guide wire 10 is essentially operating as a rail on which various elements can be placed along the longitudinal extent of the guide wire 10. The guide wire function is entirely different than the removable engagement function of Applicants' linear engagement member.

Applicants note that the guide wire 10 in Millar '358 which operates as a rail extends independently of the elements mounted on the rail and thus has its distal end, as well as its proximal end, extending out of the catheters or other elements positioned on the rail.

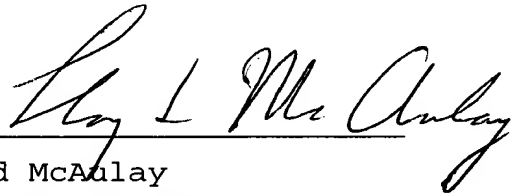
The new claim 65 contains a comparable limitation reciting that the distal most portion of the linear engagement member is embedded in one of the sidewalls of elements held together by the linear engagement member.

Applicants note that the rejection was solely on the basis of anticipation under Sec. 102. Thus, presumably the Examiner appreciates that the Millar rail teachings do not suggest Applicants' linear engagement member.

Applicants believe that this new limitation which provides an unambiguous structural distinction of Millar renders the claims allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants request that the currently amended claim 38, the previously presented claims 39-60 and 64 as well as the new claim 65 be passed to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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